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U.S.;BERLIN

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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A. Lead Stories Summary

HEADLINES

Bracing Climate In Grand Coalition (Frankfurter Allgemeine)

Government: Taxes Will Not Increase Further (Sueddeutsche Zeitung)

Interview With Head Of Medical Association (Die Welt, Tagesspiegel)

Attacks Stir Fears Of Right-Wing Violence (Frankfurter Rundschau)

Right-Wing Violence Shocks Berlin (Berliner Zeitung)

Editorials focused on the formation of the government in Iraq, Chancellor Merkel's trip to China, and the surge of right-wing violence in Germany. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute opened with a story on the attack of a PDS politician in Berlin, and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with a story on Chancellor Merkel's trip to China.

B. (Iraq) New Government

1. "A New Beginning In Iraq"

Wolfgang Gnter Lerch opined in a front-page editorial in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (5/22):

"There is no doubt that this is a historical event for Iraq and for the Iraqis. For the first time, the country has a democratic government that really deserves the name.. But security is the most important thing the new Iraq has to produce, for all dreams about a uniform and democratically functioning state of Sunnis, Kurds, and Shiites would disappear if the security question is not resolved. But in addition to the question of how to get security under control, it is also important for the country to overcome the egotism of [ethnic] groups. The protracted formation of the new government made clear how difficult it is to subjugate the interest of the religious communities, the ethnic groups and their leaders to an 'awareness for Iraq,' that is sustainable and does not crumble upon the first crisis. Skeptics may say there are too few Iraqis who have a concept for the preservation of a uniform Iraq. But the

government can now at least begin with its work."

2. "The Mile Stone, A Stumbling Bloc

Tomas Avenarius opined in an editorial in center-left Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich (5/22):

"Over the weekend, Prime Minister al-Maliki presented his government. It is the first democratically fully legitimized government team in Iraq. This is a milestone. But it is rather a stumbling block that the most important portfolios are still vacant.. In spite of all the understanding of the difficulties surrounding the

democratization of post-Saddam Iraq, one thing is obvious: A Cabinet in which such gaps are open cannot offer a convincing government team. A prime minister who makes the 'fight against terror and tyranny' his most important task goes public with a team where this post is vacant is vacant. To sum it up we can say: Al-Maliki was unable to form a 'government of national unity.'. The U.S. government has high hopes in the new government. It wants to withdraw its army as soon as the Iraqi structures are stable enough. But it does not look possible right now. All indications are that the U.S. soldiers will have to stay for a long time. The only alternative seems to be to leave Iraq to chaos and disintegration or to new tyranny."

3. Centrist Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung (6/22) noted:

"After months, in which many observers thought that Iraq can't help but accept a new civil war, something else is now happening: A new government has been formed in which all ethnic and religious groups are represented. But unfortunately, there is still everyday terror. Without this terror, Iraq, which has the third largest oil reserves in the world, would offer the fascinating opportunity for the democratic new beginning and would be an almost ideal place for investments, for a creative, modern co-existence of the western and middle eastern world. But because this perspective is visible on the horizon, the terrorists must make incessant efforts to blow up, kidnap, and decapitate people. Every lengthy phase of calm could change the skeptical mood in Iraq to a more optimistic direction. And this should not happen according to the logic of terror."

4. "The Machine Is Running"

Business daily Financial Times Deutschland of Hamburg (5/22)

judged:

"Despite all flaws, an uneasy phase of transition has now been concluded. This is an important turning point in the midst of terror and violence.. Though not all parties are, the Sunnis have now been integrated into the government. This is clear progress. For quite a few months, the development in Iraq had been contradictory. Everyday life has been characterized by violence and terror. On the other hand, there has been a political process that begins with the transition government and the provisional parliament, the constitutional referendum and the parliamentary elections. In view of the terror, this process looks as if it happens in a parallel world. But the fact that it progresses should be encouraging. The issue is to keep the machine of the democratic new beginning going. And it is going."

5. "No Progress In Iraq"

Boris Kalnoky had this to say in an editorial in right-of-center Die Welt of Berlin (5/22):

"Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki had planned to fill the most important portfolios with 'bipartisan' ministers.' With this move he wanted to stop the spiral of terror, a precondition for the withdrawal of U.S. forces. But when we look at his efforts to fill the vacancies at the key ministries we will see to what extent he succeeded: not at all.. When presenting his Cabinet, Maliki said the people will 'never forget' the bomb attack at the Shiite shrine in Samara. But all Sunnis can only understand this as a challenge, not as a message or reconciliation. A letting up of violence is not in sight..

"That is why the Americans will have difficulty reducing their forces as planned. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld clearly said this, and others like the U.S. ambassador to Iraq use the formula that the 'strategic goal of reducing the forces' remains, i.e. they will stay for the time being.. A strategic success of the Americans in Iraq, i.e. a government that is able to act democratically and pro-western is still not visible."

6. "Formally Less Disintegration"

Centrist Der Tagesspiegel of Berlin (5/22) had this to say:

"After five months of talks, this is certainly a

'historic' moment.but, nevertheless, it does not create a sigh of relief, for history has gone on over the past five month: Since the attack on the Shiite holy shrine, Iraq stands with one foot in a civil war, and it is unclear how the government will bring the chaos under control.. Formally, the formation of the government has stopped the disintegration of Iraq, but the events on the streets speak a different language."

C. (MEPP) Olmert To U.S., Egypt

(Egypt) What Will Be After Mubarak

1. "Tensions"

Wolfgang Gnter Lerch commented center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (5/20):

"The armed confrontation between Hamas and Fatah can still be avoided, but the tensions between the forces is increasing due to the hopeless situation in the occupied and autonomous territories. The people there can only improvise their economy, and the promised EU assistance has not yet arrived. Both camps also oppose each other politically. In addition, no progress has been made in the Mideast peace talks for some time, and Hamas is internationally isolated. It can be seen has an advancement that Israeli Foreign Minister Livni will meet with President Abbas this weekend. This could be a first step to resume contact before Israeli Prime Minister Olmert travels to Washington."

2. "Egyptian Rebellion"

Tomas Avenarius commented in center-left Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich (5/20):

"The leadership is currently taking ruthless actions against the opposition and breaking its promises of reform made a year ago to the international community. The aging President Mubarak has apparently decided that the time is not yet ripe for reforms. The problem is that Egypt itself could soon turn into a trouble spot. Mubarak is old and has not appointed a successor. The state leader apparently likes the idea of the dynastic principle. He hopes he can install his son, Gamal, as successor. He has recently sent him in a semi-official mission to the White House. U.S. Vice President Cheney has met with Gamal, and President Bush apparently gave him a slap on the shoulder during their

unconventional chat. This is not a recognizable rejection of the dynastic principle. On the contrary, the U.S. leadership seems to take a liking to Mubarak's plans. Only one thing is clear: Many Egyptians see that Mubarak has led his country into an impasse. Egypt is politically paralyzed. The desire for new developments makes the people prone to wrong decisions, and the regime might be wrong to think it could simply continue its old game."

D. (U.S.) Guantnamo, Alleged CIA Renditions

1. "Contracted Renditions"

Roland Heine commented in left-of-center Berliner Zeitung (5/20):

"At last, the UN Committee Against Torture called on the U.S. to close the detention camp in Guantnamo and secret prisons elsewhere in the world. The report is a serious defeat for the Bush administration, which has been relatively successful in the past in thwarting such statements from a UN institution. It is of particular significance that the Committee does not just criticize the U.S. regarding Guantnamo, but clearly indicates the systematic character of violations of human rights by the United States. The report forces us once again to discuss the role of the Europeans in general, particularly that of the German government. There is another problem apart from the illegal torture flights nobody apparently knew about in this country. It concerns the 2003 agreement between the he
U.S. and EU about easier extraditions, which EU countries are currently ratifying. It allows the U.S. to conduct prisoner transportations through the EU without having to take the people to a U.S. court afterwards. This is an official EU support for renditions."

2. "No Clarity For El-Masri"

Torsten Krauel commented in right-of-center Die Welt of Berlin (5/20):

"The rejection of Khaled el-Masri's charge does not mean that the alleged rendition never happened. Reading the judge's conclusion, it is clear that the CIA's classified report. did not convince the judge that Khaled el-Masri has made up or exaggerated the rendition. El Masri's case is

obvious and unclear at the same time. On the one side, there are sufficient hints that el-Masri was kidnapped, but, on the other side, there is evidence that the thinking in the mosque he attended in Neu-Ulm was not completely harmless. His argument that he traveled to Macedonia because he had a dispute with his wife is also dubious, particularly because al Qaida recruited members in the Balkans at the time. It is dangerous to portray suspicions as facts. However, this hesitation made the terrorism of September 11 possible. Europe might believe September 11 happened a long time ago, but it remains a shock for the Untied States. No CIA official wants to be heard before the U.S. Congress because doubts at a decisive time made a new terror attack possible. The ruthless methods the CIA is suspected of are creating new injustice. Khaled el-Masri was given a taste of the whip. Democracy can produce injustice and violence. That is the sad result from September 11, 2001."

3. "German Government Must Help El-Masri"

Bernd Pickert argued in leftist die tageszeitung of Berlin (5/20):

"It's now the German government's turn. U.S. judges have briskly and arrogantly rejected Khaled el-Masri's charge against the CIA over his rendition referring to the national security of the United States. He was then told

that he was right, but he could not get this right from the United States as if the case itself was not scandalous enough. If the U.S. government must protect their citizens, then the German government should at least protect Germans. Pure lip service will not be sufficient now. Similar to the case of the LaGrand brothers, who where deprived of international rights and executed in 1999, the case of el-Masri must be taken to the International Court of Justice. The German government should threaten to take this step, although it would not suit the improved relations between the Chancellery and the White House. With the rejection of el-Masri's case, we reached the point where the toothless European Parliament's special committee investigating the CIA no longer suffices."

E. (Burma) UN Official Meets Aung San Suu Kyi

1. "Symbol And Tactics"

Peter Sturm noted in an editorial in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (5/22):

"If the Burmese military government makes concessions, then these messieurs must feel under great pressure. But even under such circumstances, they only do what cannot be avoided. It is certainly good that the deputy UN secretary-general was allowed to meet Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, but it is in the stars whether this meeting will have any effect. Even if the opposition leader is released from her house arrest, the military seems to prevent her from playing any political role. Their tactic has always proven successful. Aung San Suu Kyi has not appeared in the political everyday business for more than one and a half decades. Her election victory of 1990 no longer has any value. But in another respect, the military leaders in Yangon could be wrong. Especially people who turn to political symbols.sometimes develop unexpected forces. The best example is Nelson Mandela. And even the best tactics do not help against symbols."

2. "Sings Of Life From Burma"

Center-left Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich (5/22) argued:

"This is the first sign of life.but it is no reason to cheer.. Neither western economic sanctions nor Asian integration attempts have prompted the military heads at the top to make concessions. On the contrary, the paranoid generals escaped all sanctions by bunkering down in a new capital that is far away from the international public and foreign diplomats.. The generals' tyranny borders on madness.. The minor concession [to see Aung] aims at dispelling international pressure, but this first meeting does not change the precarious situation in Burma. A first step to democratic reforms would be the release of Aung San Suu Kyi."

F. (Turkey) Aftermath Of Assassination Of Judge

1. "Turkey, Easily Irritable"

Kai Strittmatter opined in an editorial in center-left Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich (5/22):

"When Chancellor Merkel meets Turkey's Prime Minister Erdogan, she meets a man who likes to create the impression as the self-confident head of a strong government.. But this self-satisfaction he likes to display is only the

surface. Erdogan is the nervous premier of a nervous Turkey. Only recently Foreign Minister Gul said: 'The Turkish people is at peace with itself and its history.' . The assassination of a judge of the country's highest administrative court but even more the storm that resulted from it again shows that deep trenches are crossing the country. Behind it the various camps have entrenched. They are irreconcilable, rarely willing to enter into a dialogue, but rather willing to spread malicious gossip and in a worst case willing to use force..

"It is a weakness of the young democracy that government and opposition have been unable to even agree on a joint language. They are facing each other like forces shortly before a battle; bitter enmity has replaced a democratic controversy.. And what about Erdogan? Is he a hidden Islamist? Maybe we should measure him against his deeds: Under his government, turkey, despite all its shortcomings is as democratic and free as never before.. It is not so that Erdogan is beyond reproach. He is thin-skinned and quick-tempered, a miserable crisis manager, who often pours oil on fire.but the opposition and the government should not forget one thing: the spirits they called for are coming back to haunt them, which is not at peace with itself."

G. (U.S.) U.S. Immigration Policy

1. "With Bush"

Daniel Deckers observed in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (5/20):

"President Bush's recent proposals to secure the border is twofold: Given the Congressional elections in autumn, they appear to be an attempt to find a middle way between the immigration-hostile demands from the Republican dominated House of Representatives and the requirements of the labor market. Looking at it from the view of the southern neighbor, the plans fit dramatically into a militarization of foreign policy after September 11. The National Guard troops, which are to support the border police in the future, are, at the same time, deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq. People in Mexico will go to the ballots before the U.S. citizens. A victory of the leftist presidential candidate Andrs Manuel Lpez Obrador on July 2 cannot be ruled out. With Bush, Amlo's chances will

increase."

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